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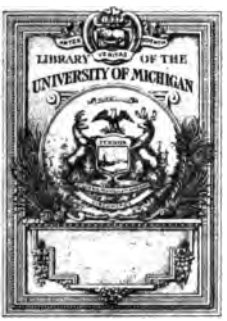

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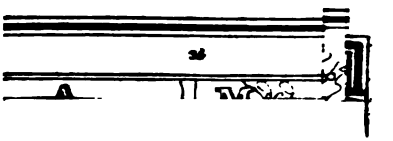

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SYRIA AND THE HOLY LAND

BY

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WITH MAPS

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MAPS

SYRIA, MESOPOTAMIA AND ADJACENT LANDS . . *Frontispiece*

PALESTINE, ANCIENT AND MODERN . . . *At end of book*

SYRIA AND THE HOLY LAND

THE HISTORY

SYRIA, chiefly because she includes Phœnicia and Palestine, has been of greater significance to mankind, spiritually and materially, than any other single country in the world.

The home of two of the monotheisms which have spread round the earth, and close neighbour to that of the third, Syria holds sites sacred to them all, and is still the resort of their pilgrims from nearly every nation under the sun. To the farthest Christian the land is almost as familiar as his own; his Bible is her geography from Beersheba to Antioch, and her history from Abraham to Paul. Above all, she is the land of his Lord's Nativity, Ministry, Cross and Resurrection; for the traditional scenes of which Christian sects have fought with each other or held a jealous truce under the contemptuous patronage of the Turk. To the Jew and the Mohammedan equally with the Christian, Jerusalem is "The Holy City." The Rock, from which rose the great Altar in front of the Temple of Israel, is for the heart of the Moslem the spot on which his Prophet prayed, and inferior in sanctity only to the Kaaba of Mecca. In Hebron, the Jew, the Christian, and the Mohammedan have, each in his turn, built and dedicated the Sanctuary which covers the tombs of the com-

mon Fathers of their Faiths. The nerves of all three religions still quiver in the soil of Syria, and sometimes round the same stones. We can feel the acuteness of the problems which thus arise in her administration. They have been complicated by the political envies and intrigues of half Asia and all Europe.

Nowhere else has so much history run into or through so narrow a space. The storm-centre of the Ancient East, the debatable ground between its rival Empires in Mesopotamia and on the Nile, and between their Greek successors, the Seleucids and Ptolemies, Syria was for three thousand years the field upon which their civilisations clashed, mingled and found a common deflection to the West by the islands of the Mediterranean. Open eastward to Arabia, Syria has drawn the substance of her populations from the hordes which that fertile mother but indigent nurse of men is ever ready to foist upon the comparative abundance of her neighbours. The slender Syrian fringes towards the desert, over which at other times those hordes have easily drifted, were built by the Romans into the eastern *Limes* of their Empire; and within this bulwark the land flourished to the aspect of a second Greece. Syria similarly served the Byzantines.

On the decay of the Byzantine Empire she formed the first prey of the Moslem conquerors (634-640 A.D.), provided for nearly a century the seat of the Khalifate (661-750), relapsed between the African and Asiatic rivals for that office into her old debatableness for three centuries more, and then for the second time became, as she was predestined to be, the field of decision between the Cross and the Crescent. The Frankish kingdom of Jerusalem lasted for only eighty-eight years (1098-1187), yet its relics are almost as numerous on the land to-day as those of the Roman Empire. Gradually all Syria fell

back to the Mohammedans, and in 1517 became a province of the Turkish Empire, since when she has had hardly any annals save the marks of her steady decay.

In 1799 Napoleon, in his ambition to conquer Asia, marched from Egypt up the coast as far as Esdraelon, but was forced back the following year. From 1832 to 1840 southern Syria came under the power of Mohammed Ali, ruler of Egypt, but was recovered by the Turks with British assistance. In 1860 another French army, disembarking at Beyrout, liberated the Christians of Lebanon, secured for them under European guarantees a separate administration with a Governor of their own faith, and laid to Damascus the first good road the land had known since the Romans left.

The military history of Syria may be pictured as the procession of nearly all the world's conquerors:—Thothmes, Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, Sennacherib and Nebuchadrezzar; Cambyses and Alexander; Pompey, Cæsar, Augustus, Titus and Hadrian; Omar and Saladin; Tamerlane; Napoleon. And now again she is one of the fronts on which two ideals of civilisation and empire oppose their arms, but with issues more momentous for humanity than were ever fought out on these same fields between Semite and Greek, Rome and the East, or Frank and Saracen.

Nor do religion and war exhaust her importance to the world. Syria bred and endowed the people who first brought the fruits of Eastern civilisation to Europe, taught the nations the value of sea-power, and set them an example in transmarine commerce and the planting of colonies.

Phœnicia gave Europe the alphabet (whatever the sources of this may have been) and some of the finer handicrafts, contributed at intervals to the food of its

peoples, or furnished them with luxuries, or infected them with her own superstitions and vices. Her armour, bowls and webs are sung by Homer. Hebrew and Greek writers acclaim the wealth of Phœnician industries and the size and the range of Phœnician ships. Long before the Christian era these galleys had passed the Straits of Gibraltar as far at least as the Canaries and Scillies; and had sailed down the Red Sea and along the east coast of Africa. The Phœnician markets drew ivory, scented woods, silk and other stuffs from India and China, and passed them to the west. Conversely Chinese writings of an early time rate the products of Syria, which they call Ta-tsin, above even those of Babylon. The incense of southern Arabia reached the temples of Greece and Italy through the port of Gaza.

It was the same in the earlier Mohammedan era. The Arab geographers, besides praising the fertility of Syria—her corn, flax and wool, her oil, wine and figs, all indigenous, and her adopted rice, maize, sugar, cotton, indigo, oranges, and citrons—magnify her exports westward, not only of these products but of porcelain, silks, and other fabrics from the Far East. Those were the times when in the bazaars of Aleppo goods were said to be sold daily to the amount of £10,000. From Syrian harbours the ships of Genoa, Pisa and Venice carried cargoes not only to Italy and Spain, but after the Crusades to the coasts of the Low Countries, and so started the prosperity of Antwerp, Bruges and other towns of north-western Europe. At most times the land has as much deserved the name of "Mediterranean" as that sea on which her harbours open, and of whose waves she was the first mistress.

All the languages of Europe bear marks of the Syrian commerce. The Greek words "arrabon," interest,

ıa," a weight, and "kabos," a measure; "klōbos," bird-
, with the names of several animals and vegetables;
ne add "Biblos," from the port that exported the
yrus); "chalkos kuprios," from which our copper is
ved; "Tyrian purple" and "Sidonian looms";
rian" as the synonym for banker in Gaul in the fifth
ury; "Jericho balsam"; "damson," "damask,"
nascene," and the French "damasquinure"; the
iæval "charta Damascena," a cotton-paper; "cotton,"
f; "mohair" and "moiré," from "muhayyar," the
ıice" stuffs of Antioch; "muslin" from Mosul, but
ugh Aleppo; "Latakia"; "carat" (through Arabic,
ıgh previously from the Greek); "camlet," "saffron"
"civet"; "sherbet," "sorbet" and "syrup," and the
ctuaire d'Acre"; probably "sugar," "candy," "lemon"
"orange" (if not through Spain); the "shalot" from
ılon, the "carob" or locust-bean; "lute" (Arabic el-'ud)
"rebeck," "ammiral," "arsenal" and "douane"—are
e reminders of what Syria has scattered out of her
to the extremes of Europe, or handed over from the
ɔsite confines of Asia.

'hese proofs at once of her fertility and of her supreme
ıntage of position are lavish everywhere in her history,
ɨpt under Turkish rule, and are pledges of the pos-
lities of her future when the hands of the Turk shall
ıst have been lifted from her suffering soil.

THE NAMES

EFORE we examine the form of the country a few words are needed upon its nomenclature. The ıes, both general and local, have always been elastic, tching and shrinking by turns or even sometimes

springing to a distance from their original sites. For th
there are two reasons: the frequency of foreign rule an
the migrations of the natives. In ignorance or for th
convenience of administration conquerors have altere
the areas of the wider names, while the popular usag
preserved their original limits or but slowly followed th
official example. And in course of migration due to wa
famine or pestilence the inhabitants of villages, and eve
of towns, have removed the names of these to their ne
settlements. It need hardly be added that in their eage
ness to locate Biblical scenes hosts of guessing pilgrim
have further confused the nomenclature of the Holy Lan

We owe the name SYRIA to the Greeks. Traditio
describes it as an abbreviation of Assyria. But it i
more probably derived from Suri, the Babylonian nam
for Mesopotamia with Asia Minor as far as the Halys an
with an uncertain extension south of the Euphrates. I
partial conformity to this the Greeks may at first ha
meant by Syria everything between the Caucasus an
Egypt. But the name shrank south of the Taurus an
Euphrates; and the Roman province of Syria was bounde
by that range and river on the north, the Levant on th
west, the desert which is Arabia on the east, and the Wad
el'-Arish—the frontier of Egypt—on the south. To a
westerners and to the native Greeks this practically is th
Syria of to-day. The Arabs call it esh-Shâ, "The Lef
or North of the Arabian Peninsula, corresponding
el-Yemen, "The Right" or the South.

From the first three adjectives were added to disti
guish the main divisions of the country. Coele—or H
low—Syria, originally the Orontes valley and the gre
trench between the Lebanons, was thence loosely stretch
over all southern Syria except Phœnicia and then (as
Roman times) restricted to Anti-Lebanon and the regio

beyond Jordan. Phœnician Syria and Philistine, or Palestine, Syria, were the two coastal regions inhabited by those peoples. But first in Greek and thence in other European languages these adjectives became nouns—PHŒNICIA and PALESTINE. By a curious diversity of fortune, while the former remained within its original limits on the coast from a little south of Carmel northwards, Palestine was carried east and north till it covered the land to the foot of Lebanon and over Jordan to the desert. This is perhaps a unique instance of the gradual application to almost the whole of a country of the name of a tribe who never occupied more than a fraction of its surface and had already disappeared from its history.

The name CANAAN—Kena'an, also Kna'—perhaps meaning "Lowland," is confined by Babylonian documents of the fourteenth century B.C. to Phœnicia, but in the form Kenahhi was used by Egyptians of the maritime plain from Gaza northwards. Thence, like "Palestine," it stretched both in Hebrew and Christian use over all the country south of Lebanon. In the Old Testament Canaanite means sometimes Phœnician, sometimes any of the tribes on the plains, as distinguished from those on the hills, and sometimes covers all the inhabitants whom Israel found in the land; while "the lip of Canaan" was the one language spoken in Palestine of which Phœnician, Hebrew and Moabite were little more than dialects.

The name of another ancient tribe, the AMORITES, is applied by some Old Testament writers to the inhabitants before Israel of the Western Range and of part of the Eastern, by others to all the pre-Israelite peoples and by Babylonian documents to Western Palestine as a whole. In the English Old Testament the names "Syria" and "Syrians" render the Hebrew ARAM, the designation of the fourth Semitic race which, with Phœnicians, Hebrews

and Arabs, has seriously contested the possession of country. Sometimes in ancient literature the n ARABIA included Syria, just as the Turkish 'Arabi still does; but Arabia is properly everything to the s and east of Syria.

BOUNDARIES—EXTERNAL AND INTERNA

THE natural boundaries of Syria have been stat N., the Euphrates and the Taurus Range; W., Levant; E., the Arabian Desert; and S., the Desert Egypt, on a line drawn from Rafa or el'Arish to the h of the Gulf of Akaba. These enclose some 400 miles and S. by 70 to 100 W. and E.

The form of the land may be generally described on five parallel lines running N. and S. between the and the Desert, as shown below.

N.

Sea.	*The Coast.*	*The Maritime Plain (partial).*	*The Western Range.*	*The Orontes-Jordan-Arabah-Valley.*	*The Eastern Range.*	*Dese*

S.

But these lines are neither regular nor uniform. E has modifications of direction, of level and of charac which give the surface of the land a complicated vari and have always divided its populations both politic and economically. Like Switzerland, Syria has wit herself natural frontiers more definite than some of th which separate her from the neighbouring countries. T

ıch cross-divisions are to be emphasised above the rest, ot because they are the greatest (for they are not), but ecause they effect a convenient partition of Syria into ıree provinces.

The first is just N. of Tripoli, where the Western ange is cleft by the Nahr el-Kebir, which sharply dis-nguishes the Nusairiyeh portion of the range from the ebanons; as the Eleutherus of the Greeks, this river fre-uently formed a political frontier. And the second is ıst N. of Tyre, the Nahr el-Kasimiyeh, which also cleaves ıe Western Range separating Lebanon from the hills of alilee and then bends N. into the Beka' or valley between ıe Lebanons, while its main direction W. to E. is fairly ntinued over Jordan by the foot of Anti-Lebanon round Damascus. There are thus three distinct divisions:

N.

1. NORTHERN SYRIA:
   From the Taurus to the Nahr el-Kebir.
2. THE LEBANONS: WITH DAMASCUS.
3. PALESTINE:
   From the Nahr el-Kasimiyeh to the W. el-'Arish.

S.

This last is further divided by the Plain of Esdraelon, ıterrupting the Western Range and affording a broad ccess from the coast to the Jordan Valley and Eastern alestine, but seldom an effective border; and by Mount armel, shooting over from the Western Range to the sea nd separating Esdraelon from the Maritime Plain, but ever either a military or a political frontier. The rest f the Western Range passes imperceptibly from the hills nd valleys of Samaria to the compact tableland of Judæa,

along which it is separated from the Maritime Plain b the lower but distinct range of the Shephelah; an descends very gradually upon what the Hebrews called th Negeb.

Nor has even that most singular feature of the earth' surface, the Orontes-Jordan Valley, continued by th Arabah to the Red Sea, proved a strong frontier, excep at its deepest part where it is filled by the Dead Sea. Fo the fertility of the party of it called the Beka' link rather than divides the Lebanons; the upper Jordan an its lakes have not always separated Galilee from Jaula and Hauran; generally Gilead and sometimes even Moa belonged to Samaria, and under the Turks Gilead at lea has been administered from Nablûs; while, further south the ancient Edom lay on *both* sides of the Arabah an to-day the same Arab tribes pasture their flocks in eac region at different seasons.

On the Eastern Range, which rises only south of th Nahr el-Kebir, there is across Anti-Lebanon a high valle or pass (4,500 feet) that gives access from the Bek to Damascus down the course of the Abana. The souther skirts of Hermon, falling steeply to the tableland o Hauran, mark a border between different forms of cultur and a demarcation convenient for minor political pur poses, but they are not a real frontier. The volcani Hauran again is separated from the limestone Gilead b the abrupt rift through which the Yarmuk flows, a ethnic and political border nearly always in ancient time Gilead's hills pass imperceptibly into the plateau of Moa as Samaria's into that of Judæa, but on the south of Moa there are two successive trenches, the Wady Mojib, th ancient Arnon 2,000 feet deep, and the Wady el-Hesi le deep and abrupt, both of which have proved historic frontiers.

In any political re-distribution of Syria all these features must be taken into account.

THE COAST

IN general the Coast is one of the straightest in the world, with no deep estuary or gulf (save at the extreme north), and no protecting island of any size. But the part of it south of Mount Carmel differs substantially from that to the north. From Carmel to the Delta of the Nile is a stretch of sandhills and low rocks, with the mountains well back from the sea, and no broad river mouth or other natural harbour. The prevailing winds are from the S.W., and, with strong sea-currents from the same direction carrying the Nile mud, have always tended to silt up the outlets of the small streams, and the one or two artificial harbours, which like Herod's Caesarea have been urged upon so inhospitable a shore. Alexander wisely built his great port at the west instead of at the east or Pelusiac end of the Delta. At Carmel and northwards, where the hills draw to the coast, short capes jut out, there are bays, sheltered some from two directions, some from only one; and a few islets form harbours sufficient for the largest ships of antiquity.

We see why the Phœnician power gathered and flourished just here, for besides the protection for shipping the sands are rife with materials for glass, and the shallow waters teem with fish, sponges, and the *murex,* the source of the purple; metal and timber once abounded in the hills, and round or through these there is access to the grain fields of the interior, and to Damascus and Aleppo. How humble the beginnings of Phœnicia were may be perceived from the names of its towns: Akka perhaps

[illegible] Beyrout [illegible] Tripoli [illegible] Aleppo [illegible] Damascus [illegible] Palmyra [illegible] Jerusalem [illegible] Jaffa [illegible] Haifa [illegible] Acre [illegible] Nazareth [illegible] Tiberias [illegible] Jericho [illegible] Dead Sea [illegible] Jordan [illegible] Petra [illegible] Hebron [illegible] Bethlehem [illegible] Gaza [illegible] Ashdod [illegible] Ascalon [illegible] Askelon [illegible] Ramleh [illegible] Lydda [illegible] Joppa [illegible] Caesarea [illegible] Samaria [illegible] Shechem [illegible] Nablous [illegible] Ebal [illegible] Gerizim [illegible] Jacob's Well [illegible] Sychar [illegible] Bethel [illegible] Ai [illegible] Gilgal [illegible] Shiloh [illegible] Ramah [illegible] Mizpeh [illegible] Gibeon [illegible] Beeroth [illegible] Kirjath-jearim [illegible] Emmaus [illegible] Bethhoron [illegible] Aijalon [illegible] Gezer [illegible] Ekron [illegible] Timnath [illegible] Zorah [illegible] Eshtaol [illegible] Beth-shemesh [illegible] Adullam [illegible] Keilah [illegible] Engedi [illegible] Ziph [illegible] Carmel [illegible] Maon [illegible] Beersheba [illegible] Arad [illegible] Hormah [illegible] Ziklag [illegible] Rabbah [illegible] Ammon [illegible] Gilead [illegible] Bashan [illegible] Hauran [illegible] Golan [illegible] Kedesh [illegible] Hazor [illegible] Megiddo [illegible] Taanach [illegible] Ibleam [illegible] Dothan [illegible] Jezreel [illegible] Shunem [illegible] Endor [illegible] Nain [illegible] Capernaum [illegible] Bethsaida [illegible] Chorazin [illegible] Magdala [illegible] Cana [illegible] Nazareth [illegible] Bethany [illegible] Bethphage [illegible] Olivet [illegible] Gethsemane [illegible] Kidron [illegible] Siloam [illegible] Zion [illegible] Moriah [illegible] Acra [illegible] Millo [illegible] Ophel [illegible] Bezetha [illegible] Calvary [illegible] Golgotha [illegible] Sepulchre [illegible] Tyre [illegible] Sidon [illegible] Zarephath [illegible] Sarepta [illegible] Ptolemais [illegible] Accho [illegible] Dor [illegible] Tabor [illegible] Hermon [illegible] Lebanon [illegible] Antilebanon [illegible] Orontes [illegible] Leontes [illegible] Litani [illegible] Abana [illegible] Pharpar [illegible] Damascus [illegible] Palmyra [illegible] Euphrates [illegible] Tigris [illegible] Nineveh [illegible] Babylon [illegible] Ur [illegible] Haran [illegible] Padan-aram [illegible] Mesopotamia [illegible] Assyria [illegible] Chaldea [illegible] Persia [illegible] Media [illegible] Elam [illegible] Susa [illegible] Shushan [illegible] Ecbatana [illegible] Hamadan [illegible] Rhages [illegible] Tehran [illegible] Caspian Sea [illegible] Black Sea [illegible] Euxine [illegible] Bosphorus [illegible] Hellespont [illegible] Dardanelles [illegible] Aegean Sea [illegible] Mediterranean [illegible] Nile [illegible] Egypt [illegible] Memphis [illegible] Thebes [illegible] Alexandria [illegible] Rhodes [illegible] Cyprus [illegible] Crete [illegible] Malta [illegible] Sicily [illegible] Italy [illegible] Rome [illegible] Tiber [illegible] Ostia [illegible] Puteoli [illegible] Appii Forum [illegible] Three Taverns [illegible] Spain [illegible] Gibraltar [illegible] Atlantic [illegible] Britain [illegible] Ireland [illegible] Gaul [illegible] Rhine [illegible] Danube [illegible] Germany [illegible] Dacia [illegible] Thrace [illegible] Macedonia [illegible] Philippi [illegible] Amphipolis [illegible] Apollonia [illegible] Thessalonica [illegible] Berea [illegible] Achaia [illegible] Athens [illegible] Corinth [illegible] Cenchrea [illegible] Lechaeum [illegible] Isthmus [illegible] Peloponnesus [illegible] Sparta [illegible] Argos [illegible] Mycenae [illegible] Epidaurus [illegible] Nemea [illegible] Cleonae [illegible] Sicyon [illegible] Patras [illegible] Ionian Sea [illegible] Adriatic [illegible] Illyricum [illegible] Dalmatia [illegible] Epirus [illegible] Nicopolis [illegible] Actium [illegible] Dyrrachium [illegible] Via Egnatia [illegible] Via Appia [illegible] Via Flaminia [illegible] Via Aurelia [illegible] Via Cassia [illegible] Via Clodia [illegible] Via Cornelia [illegible] Via Valeria [illegible] Via Tiburtina [illegible] Via Salaria [illegible] Via Nomentana [illegible] Via Latina [illegible] Via Labicana [illegible] Via Praenestina [illegible] Via Gabina [illegible] Via Prenestina [illegible] Via Collatina [illegible] Via Tiburtina [illegible] Via Valeria [illegible] Via Sublacensis [illegible] Via Nomentana [illegible] Via Salaria [illegible] Via Pinciana [illegible] Via Flaminia [illegible] Via Cassia [illegible] Via Aurelia [illegible] Via Clodia [illegible] Via Cornelia [illegible] Via Portuensis [illegible] Via Ostiensis [illegible] Via Appia [illegible] Via Ardeatina [illegible] Via Ostiensis [illegible] Via Portuensis [illegible] Via Cornelia [illegible] Via Clodia [illegible] Via Aurelia [illegible] Via Cassia [illegible] Via Flaminia [illegible] Via Pinciana [illegible] Via Salaria [illegible] Via Nomentana [illegible] Via Sublacensis [illegible] Via Valeria [illegible] Via Tiburtina [illegible] Via Collatina [illegible] Via Prenestina [illegible] Via Gabina [illegible] Via Praenestina [illegible] Via Labicana [illegible] Via Latina

he north by a cape; it prospered in the early Christian eriod as the port of Antioch, and still carries on a con-iderable trade in tobacco, sponges and silk. Ruins and choked harbour are all that remain of Seleucia, ntioch's previous port in Greek times. Lastly, Alexan-retta, the safest and most convenient harbour on the coast ut troubled with fever, commands an import and export ade of the combined value of three millions sterling; land it traffics with Aleppo, and is to be, if it is not ready, connected with the Baghdad railway.

THE MARITIME PLAIN

THE second of the parallel lines on which Syria is disposed, is not continuous. Virtually confined to ie south of Mount Carmel with a few miles more to ie north, the maritime plain dwindles to a ribbon between ebanon and the sea, and recovers only in patches along ie rest of the coast. But its breadth south of Carmel of the highest importance to Syria from both a military nd an economic point of view, especially if we take along ith it the short range of the Shephelah or "low hills," hich intervenes between the plain and the abrupt table-nd of Judæa.

On the extreme south, eight or ten sandy marshes from gypt, stands Gaza, "the vestibule of Syria," and the ort and market of the Arabs of the southern desert. hence to Carmel spread some of Syria's most fertile elds, and across them runs the main highway of her war id traffic. This keeps well inland so as to avoid the sands id marshes of the coast, and passes the Philistine towns hich flourished on its trade but suffered from the armies hom its clear course has attracted both north and south,

as well as from the plagues which it has frequently carri out of Egypt.

This level and famous stage of the route between t Nile and Mesopotamia might compass Carmel either b the sea or (as most armies and caravans have preferred by one of three easy passes through the low hills betwe Carmel and the western range, on to Esdraelon; when their march might continue either coastwise by t Phœnician cities or inland across Jordan (whether sou or north of the Lake of Galilee) to Damascus, and so the Euphrates. On the maritime plain this road is bless with fairly sufficient water, and there are no great natur obstacles, but it is exposed, as most invaders by it ha experienced, to attacks down the various valleys a slopes which fall from the Western Range.

The Maritime Plain is very fertile. Philistia a Sharon with the wider valleys, that debouch upon the from the hills, bear good wheat, millet, vines, orang citrons, and flourishing vegetables. Date-palms do w in the south, and the olive is as fruitful as anywhere the limestone hills of the Shephelah, on which also barle fields are numerous. But these proofs of the capacity the soil render only more obvious the waste, the want public utilities and the poverty of the native peasantr The German and Jewish colonies which have been plant since 1868 and 1870 respectively, are convincing eviden of the wealth everywhere possible to industry and a lit science, were there only a government which dealt just with the cultivator and assisted his toil by proper roa irrigation and drainage. The Germans, from Württe burg and of the Temple sect, introduced better metho of agriculture in the belief that the Lord would come the land, when it was made ready for Him; and t example of their practice if not of their faith has be

followed more powerfully by Jewish settlers, driven from eastern Europe by persecution, but equipped by capitalists of their own creed. The Germans have two colonies, one by Jaffa and one at Haifa under Mount Carmel, whose slopes their industry has converted into vineyards not unlike those of the Rhine or the Neckar.

Of the forty-five to fifty Jewish settlements in Palestine since 1870—said to have contained before the war some 13,000 people—there are ten or eleven near Jaffa and southward, and others on the southern slopes of Carmel—altogether with a membership of over 6,000. The improvements they have effected in spite of the obstructions of the government and the agricultural inexperience of most of the settlers, have been wonderful, as the present writer can testify from a knowledge of their progress since 1880.

They have doubled, and in some cases, trebled the annual yield of the acres they cultivate. They have laid down new roads. They have introduced new stocks of fruit, and by researches at their experimental station are said to have developed varieties of grain and fruit fitted to withstand the sirocco and other rigours of the climate. They have reduced the fevers of some swampy districts by a lavish planting of eucalyptus, known to the Arabs as "the Jews' tree." In part they have overcome the menace of the drifting sands of the coast. Their exports of wine to Europe had already become considerable. The influence of their example upon the native peasantry may be appreciated.

Esdraelon, which carries the same conditions of fertility almost as far inland as Jordan, is in its western half one vast wheat field: now partly the property of the Sultan and partly that of a wealthy Greek family. But I under-

stand that just before the war a Jewish colony or two had been planted on its margin.

THE WESTERN RANGE

THE mountain-ranges of Syria present an extraordinary variety of height and of surface. From the heated coasts and valleys at their skirts they rise in parts to over ten thousand feet, at which in that latitude the snow seldom disappears. Besides the natural terraces afforded by the limestone structure of their slopes, the ranges contain an unusually large proportion of high valleys and table-lands of considerable fertility, buttressed or surmounted by steep bare ridges. From all this have arisen many facts of political and economic importance.

The mountains of Syria have not only been the last of her lines to fall to foreign invaders—except in the singular case of Israel. Throughout her troubled history they have also been the refuges of the more independent and therefore intelligent and enterprising elements of her native population. And both in the Greek Period and in modern times they have attracted settlers from the west. Therefore, we find on them to-day a great variety of the smaller races and sects. There is often a less scattered population, with more people to the square mile, than on some of the richer plains below. And while in parts agriculture and industry flourish, in parts also these have been pushed up to levels where nature gives them little encouragement, and the only reason why men should live and labour on such shelves is the absence of security below. Since 1880 there has been a considerable emigration from the Syrian mountains to America and Australia. When Syria once more enjoys a just government there may follow by migra-

tion to the plains a still further abandonment of some of the loftier levels on which agriculture is now precariously pursued.

All this is especially true of the Western Range.

Starting (as has been said) from the Taurus, the Western Range runs, as the Giaour Dagh, south to the Orontes and close to the coast on a general height of from four to six thousand feet, but with loftier peaks. This was the Mons Amanus of the ancients, the boundary between Syria and Cilicia, and its chief pass (by Beilan) was known as the Syrian Gate. Its slopes are favourable to the vine and other fruits, parts are covered with evergreen, oaks, and firs; streams abound, and the range is crossed by roads from Alexandretta to Antioch and Aleppo, the Beilan pass still the easiest.

South of the Orontes, the range bears the name Jebel en-Nusairiyeh, till its next break in the valley of the Nahr el-Kebir. Besides the bare Jebel Akra it consists of a series of limestone hills clothed with pines, oaks, and various shrubs, and of valleys with clear streams, strips of corn-land and olive orchards. There is much good grass. The inhabitants, not Semitic but of the Iranian type, and practising a variety of the Mohammedan religion, mixed with Pagan and Christian elements, have an evil reputation, but are said by travellers to cultivate their lands and parts of the neighbouring plains with a care and neatness beyond other natives of Syria. They live in scattered hamlets.

South of the Nahr el-Kebir the range bears the name of Lebanon to the Nahr el-Kasimiyeh, just north of Tyre, a length of 105 miles. It rises from the narrow coast by steep slopes, buttresses and shoulders with many terraces, natural and artificial, that are cultivated to heights of four, five, or even six and seven thousand feet, and it is

dotted with villages and monasteries. Wheat is said to grow up to 6,000 feet, and vines from 3,000 to nearly 5,000 feet, with olives still higher. There are many other fruit trees, but the principal culture is that of the mulberry, grown for the production of silk cocoons. It is reported that in the Lebanon and the vilayet of Beyrout there were 132 steam spinning factories with 2,250 looms, and that Beyrout annually shipped to Marseilles raw silk and cocoons to the value of £800,000. Silk is also woven in the mountain for native use.

Above and behind these cultivated zones Lebanon rises to a high bleak ridge, bare or dotted with pines and shrub, which shuts out the east, and by its loftiness exercises a powerful influence on the climate, not only of the slopes below but of the whole of southern Syria. The summits of the ridge are Jebel Makmal and Dahr el-Kodîb above the Cedars (both just over 10,000 feet), Jebel Muneitra and Jebel Sannîn (over 9,000). From this ridge the east side of the range falls steeply, with but few villages and far less cultivation than on the west, into the Beka'. The Lebanon is crossed by several roads including that from Tripoli by the famous Cedars to Baalbek over a height of 7,000 feet, and by two lower passes, that on which the road and rail from Beyrout to Damascus cross the range at about 5,000 feet, and that by Baruk slightly lower.

South of Lebanon and the cleft of the Nahr el-Kasimiyeh are the highlands of Galilee, of which Northern or Upper Galilee is undulating tableland surrounded by hills from 2,000 to 4,000 feet high, and Southern or Lower Galilee, parallel ranges below 1,900 feet with broad valleys between them, and a few depressions under 500 feet. Both Galilees are very fertile. There is profusion of bush and scattered woodland, proofs of the possibilities of afforestation, some vines, olives, and stretches of arable

ground. In ancient times "no part lay idle"; the olives were said to be easier to cultivate here than elsewhere in Syria, and the villages and towns were frequent. Under good government there might be great wealth in Galilee, in a climate singularly happy.

South of these highlands the Western Range suffers its greatest separation (as already noted) in the Plain of Esdraelon, which rises little above sea-level between the coast and its open descent to the Jordan.

South of Esdraelon the Western Range rises again in the hills and high valleys of Samaria, or Mount Ephraim. From summits of 3,000 feet and a watershed averaging 2,000, it descends on the Maritime Plain by a gentle slope for the most part sterile with infrequent breaks of olive-groves and a few villages. The fall of the eastern flank is deeper and far more rapid, but it relaxes in several broad, fertile valleys. Within these flanks the Mount surprises the visitor by the number of its small plains, meadows and vales, from one of which, the Makhneh, east and south-east of Nablus, comes some of the finest wheat in Syria; the olives and other fruits are excellent. A shallow pass cleaves these highlands, that which crosses between Ebal and Gerizim, and holds Nablus at its centre. Nablus, the ancient Shechem, is the natural capital of Palestine in a very fertile district, with easy roads both to the coast that is only twenty-six miles off, and to the fords of Jordan that are not eighteen. In olden times Shechem or its successor and neighbour, the city of Samaria, held Gilead and even Moab in its power, and the Turkish Government for long administered from Nablus a great part of eastern Palestine.

The Samarian highlands slowly close and slightly rise to the compact plateau of Judæa, about 2,000 feet high, little more than thirty-five miles long from Bethel to the

south of Hebron, and from fourteen broad from its edge above the Shephelah to where on the east the level drops below 1,200 feet and into desert. Judæa consists largely of stony moorland with rough scrub and thorns, but after the winter rains there is considerable herbage. Sometimes it is less stony with a little wheat and more barley. Sometimes it breaks into shallow glens with olives, figs and terraces of vines. There is no running water. Ancient records, and the ruined terraces on the glens and in the defiles leading down to the west, testify that once even this, the least attractive part of all the Western Range, enjoyed much greater fertility. The olive thrives nowhere better than at the level, and on the limestone, of Judæa. Both in the Jewish and the early Moslem eras oil and wine were abundant.

The Bible emphasises the pastoral character of Judæa, and many of its greatest personalities have been shepherds; yet its cattle are small, and its people used to covet the bulls and rams of Bashan and of Gilead. Nor are there here any of the physical conditions of a great city—neither river nor trunk road nor convenient market for the surrounding peoples. Moab is shut off by the great gulf of the Dead Sea; and the Arabs of the southern deserts resort to Gaza rather than to Hebron. But this very aloofness of Judæa guaranteed her security for longer periods than was the case with her sister Samaria, kept her people more free of alien influences, and while concentrating the national mind gave it greater opportunity of observing the fates of other peoples and the course of history. Jerusalem, though a tolerable fortress, is not a natural but a spiritual creation.

The narrow plateau of Judah reaches its southern edge a little to the south of Hebron and thence the range rolls gently down in broad undulations, through which the

dy Khulil winds, to Beersheba. There is still consid-
ɔle farming as far as Dhoheriyah, the ancient Debîr,
.e eleven miles from Hebron, with a few springs, pools,
in the rainy season even streams. From Dhoheriyah
Beersheba is a slope, much less fertile, of about sixteen
ɛs more. This forms as easy an approach to Judæa
any, and during the Jewish Exile its villages were
lually overrun by an Edomite drift from the south-
. Yet it was seldom, if ever, used by invaders with
plateau as their objective; for to the south of it across
Negeb lie east and west the steep and haggard ridges
:he desert, while the plains of Philistia, even though
r offer but few and narrow avenues to Jerusalem, have
ays been more attractive, for one reason or another,
ı to the desert nomads and to armies from Egypt.
The Negeb, as the Hebrews called it, the Parched Land
he name is wrongly rendered "the South" in the author-
l version of the Old Testament—begins about Dhoheri-
. with the decrease of fertility and, falling from about
00 feet to (in parts) 500 above the sea, extends to
ıe twenty miles beyond Beersheba. Save in patches
ı is a region of apparently sterile soil with wadies that
lry for the greater part of the year, but under the rains
denly brim with torrents. For centuries the Negeb has
l no settled life save about the wells of Beersheba, and
ı only in recent years. Arab nomads sow fractions of
with barley or millet and reap the most meagre of
ps, which south of the Wady Sheriyah are said to fail
ılly every third year. But the ruins of many villages—
ıe of them small towns with a careful architecture—
l of terraces indicative of cultivation, which mostly
e from the Byzantine period, prove that even the Negeb
ı its possibilities under a good government. The wasted
ıter floods could be stored, and there are probably many

wadies in which water might be drawn by digging for
But so long as insecurity prevails, wells are unprofitable

THE ORONTES-JORDAN-ARABAH VALLEY

THE fourth of the parallel lines of Syria is part of
great "fault" extending from Armenia to the G
of Akaba on the Red Sea, and containing the deep
trench on the earth's surface. This begins at Lake Hul
which is just 7 feet above sea-level, falls to the Dead S
whose surface is 1,292 feet below the sea, and its bott
1,300 lower still, and rises again to the sea-level so
thirty-five miles further south in the Arabah.

We may start with this line in the neighbourhood
Antioch, where the Orontes (present name el-'Asi) lea
it to cut through the Western Range to the sea. H
is a broadish plain, el-Amk (the Unki of the Assyrian
none of it 600 feet above sea-level and extremely ri
The ancient prosperity of Antioch, to which vast ru
still testify, was due only in part to this fertility;
rest came from through-traffic to the Levant, most
which was long ago lost. From Antioch the valley of
Orontes ascends very slowly between the Western Ra
and the edge of the high plateau of N. Syria; the ru
of ancient townships—averaging, it is said, one to the m
—are proofs of its natural resources and melancholy p
tests against the incompetence of the Turkish Gove
ment.

At Hama (Hamath, 1,015 feet), an administrati
centre with 80,000 inhabitants, good grazing lands, ma
factures of cloth and leather, and considerable trade w
the Arabs of the neighbouring desert, the valley is reac
by the Aleppo railway, which it carries on to the Be

Further on, from Homs (Emesa, 1,660 feet), also a market for the Beduin, with rich gardens and fields and a temperate climate, a railway diverges to Tripoli by the Nahr el-Kebir, and it is also possible to reach Palmyra in five days by carriage over the level desert. After Homs the valley becomes the Beka' or "Cleft" between the great Lebanons, and, varying in breadth from 6 to 7 miles, rises to over 3,770 feet at the sources of the Orontes about Baalbek. Large parts of this stretch are hard and sterile; there are fewer villages and ancient ruins, but considerable pasture.

About Baalbek is the watershed, streams start south, the Nahr el-Lîtânî begins. The Beka' becomes very fertile, but even under the western enterprise of recent years it is only partially cultivated. Its ancient wealth must have been far greater. Vines and other fruits flourish, there are good trees and great possibilities for timber, room and fit soil for wheat, and during most of the year temperate airs. The breadth is from 8 to 10 miles.

From the S. end of the Beka' the Lîtânî breaks in a passage of its own to the S.W. and W., to bound (as the Kasimiyeh) the Lebanon. But we follow the main "fault" south to where Jordan rises. The land here, about Hasbeya, is singularly rich in olives and vines at a level of rather over 2,000 feet. Then the descent is rapid through good wheat lands, once well-cultivated, well-watered meadows with oaks and other large trees to the marshes and jungles of papyrus about Lake Huleh (7 feet above the sea), with a Jewish agricultural colony, and thence over rugged country to the Lake of Galilee (682 feet below sea-level). On the N.W. shore of the Lake lies the rich warm plain of Gennesaret, whose ancient wealth of fruit-trees and corn might easily be restored by drainage and irrigation. The fisheries of the Lake have always been

rich; once the pickled fish carried its name to the markets of Rome. From the Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea the length of the Jordan Valley is some 65 miles, with a breadth varying from 3 to 14—most of it good soil save in the wider bed which the river fills in spring and which is mainly mud and jungle with a broad margin of dead marl.

No part of Syria shows more signal proofs of the mingled neglect and oppression of the Turk. In the upper portion about Beisan (Bethshan) flax abounded in the Roman period—the linen of Bethshan was then famous—and maize and rice were plentiful in the Mohammedan era. Lower down, towards Jericho, groves of the date-palm stretched for miles, there were gardens of balsam farmed by the Roman Government, and before and during the Crusades the sugar-cane was cultivated. Wheat grows well in many parts—up to the stirrups of the rider on the broad plains opposite Jericho. A large part of the Ghôr, as this stretch of the valley is called, was appropriated by the last Sultan, and to that Imperial act are due a few recent improvements in its cultivation.

How much more might be effected by a system of irrigation—less from the Jordan itself, for its bed is deep, than from its many tributaries—is not hard to estimate. Nowhere would irrigation produce swifter or richer results, for the climate is sub-tropical. Wild plants and fruits abound in a luxuriance excelled only by some of the warmest and wettest valleys of East Africa, to the fauna and flora of which those of the Ghôr are said to be akin. The few permanent inhabitants of this hothouse are (outside Jericho) of a blackish, fuzzy-haired, almost negroid aspect. But both the peasants of Western Palestine and the Arabs of Moab annually descend to cultivate portions of the generous well-warmed soil.

THE EASTERN RANGE

THE Eastern range has no counterpart to the two northmost sections of the Western. It rises from the Syrian plateau south of Homs, and first opposes Lebanon by Anti-Lebanon in almost equal length and height. Anti-Lebanon falls into two parts divided by a broad plateau and the gorge of the Barada or Abana river. To the north of this is Jebel esh-Sherki, "Eastern Mountain," with no conspicuous summit. On its western flank falling steeply to the Beka', there is hardly a village. The Wady Ashfûfeh, which runs up from Reyak in the Beka', carrying the railway to Damascus, has a good stream and abundant vegetation; over the watershed is the prosperous village of ez-Zebedâni with a fertile plain on the head waters of the Abana. Between the ridges that the Jebel esh-Sherki throws out eastward to the desert there are a number of other brooks and copious springs, beside which some 9 or 10 villages thrive among their vineyards, fig and pomegranate orchards, meadows, less frequent wheat fields and some poplars. But these lands are liable to be overrun every spring by the desert Arabs who exact blackmail when they do not plunder or settle down themselves to sow and reap the fields. For even on these heights may be seen that process which from the earliest times has been constant down all the border of the Eastern Range—the gradual rise of tribes or of families from the nomadic to the agricultural level.

The southern part of Anti-Lebanon, Mount Hermon or Jebel esh-Sheikh (9,050 feet), has more villages on its western slopes and fewer on its eastern, with luxuriant trees to 4,700 feet, and above that scattered oaks and pines and sometimes a thick bush, with wild but edible fruits.

Snow falls deep in winter to the lower levels of the mo
tain and hardly disappears in summer from the summit

But the glory of Anti-Lebanon lies at its feet; its ch
creation is Damascus. The site of this most enduring
cities is defenceless, remote from the sea, and on
natural line of commerce, well out on the desert, wh
lies behind as well as in front of it. But the mount
by gathering the greatest of its waters to a narrow g
among its barren eastern folds, and then flinging the r
far out on a lofty drainable plateau (about 2,250
above the sea), has created some hundred and fifty squ
miles of exuberant fertility. From this, known as
Ghûta, rises the oldest, the largest and richest, the m
steadfast of all the cities of Syria.

Damascus has survived the rise and fall of seve
systems of religion. She has been harried and held by
the great empires of antiquity and the Middle Ages,
has seen them perish. Her only rival in Syria has b
Antioch, and Antioch has decayed while Damascus
flourishes. In addition to her own fertility, she
learned to bend to herself most of the through traffic
tween the Nile and Mesopotamia; she is the outpost
civilisation in the Desert, and an indispensable market
the nomads of all Northern Arabia. Before the war
population was at least 200,000 with that of her suburb
some rate it at 300,000.

Down the southern slopes of Hermon the Eastern Ra
falls swiftly upon the vast plateau of Hauran, with
hilly neighbours of Jaulan and Jedur above the Lake
Galilee. The northern levels of Hauran are from 2,0
to 3,000 feet above the sea, but on the south the plat
shelves off by broad degrees of about 1,600 and 1,300 f
to its limit in the deep valley of the Yarmuk. The surf
is volcanic, its rocks basalt, and its soil a rich, red lo

s and with very few streams, except where its
n steps yield powerful waterfalls working many
he plateau bears abundant wheat and good pas-

ran wheat is in repute all round the Levant. Even
nsecurity to which the Turk for the most part leaves
harvests can be heavy; they reach Damascus or
st at Haifa in long camel caravans or, since 1895,
way. Before the war the annual yield of grain
d to be 320,000 tons. Behind the Roman *Limes*
ı was one of the granaries of the Empire. The
f public works—roads, aqueducts, reservoirs and
ıtions—are still visible across it. A wealth of
ınd domestic buildings, with numerous inscriptions,
to the continued prosperity of Hauran through the
ine period; but the inscriptions almost cease from
ə of the Moslem invasion, and the number of aban-
ır half-occupied towns evinces the insecurity which
sed the country ever since. Recent Turkish admin-
ɑ has somewhat improved matters, but this opulent
e awaits a stronger government in order to become
ne of the food-producing centres of Western Asia.
he east it is bounded by the rocky fastness of the
low deposit of hard lava some 26 miles by 20, the
at all times of turbulent tribes, and by the Druze-
in with a highly potential but at present a some-
recarious cultivation. This eastern bulwark of
, some 35 miles N. and S. by 20 E. and W., has
age height of between 4,000 and 5,000 feet (with
ıit of 6,000), and gives birth to not a few springs
eams. It bears many ruins of Roman and Greek
ion, and is said to support to-day some 40,000
with a few "Mountain-Arabs," as they are called,
ıe groups of Christians. Beyond the mountain is

the desert—sand steppes and *Harras wastes* of lava, in t… The greatest of which lies the generous oasis of Ruhbe, onc… a Greek and Roman outpost. The desolate steppes on wh… Hauran runs out to the southeast, before the actual de… is reached, are rich in the *Kali* plant, of the ashes of wh… there is a considerable export to the soap-factories of W… ern Palestine.

With the Yarmuk Valley, the Sheriat-el-Menadireh, t… volcanic surface comes to an end and the limestone hills … Gilead begin with an average height of over 3,000 feet a… some summits of 4,000. Their ridges are covered wit… woods of the evergreen oak and other trees. The valley… and occasional plains, watered by numerous springs a… streams, hold orchards of pomegranate, apricot and oliv… and vineyards with a considerable export of raisins; als… not infrequent fields of wheat and barley, especially on th… upper reaches of the Jabbok towards, and in, the country of the ancient Ammonites. But the feature of Gilead's life which lives most clearly in the traveller's memory is the wealth of its herds of cattle, large and small. For Syria, the streams are exceptionally numerous.

Like those of Hauran, the fresh climate and fertility attracted Greek settlers and colonies of Roman veterans; and Gilead still shows the imposing ruins of their opulent cities. The theatres at Gadara and Abila, the long aqueduct leading thither from Hauran, the columns at Arbela and Dion, the theatre, the agora, the colonnaded streets and the naumachy at Gerasa show how Europeans once prospered and enjoyed life to the full on those last margins of civilisation towards the desert.

The southern boundary of Gilead towards Moab is as indefinite as that of Samaria towards Judæa; but by the Wady Hesban the hills have ceased to roll, the woods have died out and we are again on a compact, treeless plateau.

The high limestone table-land of Moab, 2,300 to 3,300 feet above the sea, though—unlike the volcanic Hauran—broken by ribs and scalps of grey rock, is for the most part excellent soil for wheat, which grows richly across its spacious streamless extent without artificial aids, on the strength of the heavy rains and snows of winter. Where wheat is not possible the pasture is good, at least through the spring and early summer, and lasts still longer in the deep, well-watered cañons that cleave the plateau from the desert to the Dead Sea.

On the high, fresh moors the paths are all stamped with the footmarks of sheep and cattle, and in the height of summer you will find droves of them by the perennial streams in the bottoms of the cañons. In ancient times Moab with Gilead provided meat and cereals for the people of Western Palestine; and in 1904 the present writer met corn-brokers from Jerusalem negotiating for the harvests before they were reaped. Doughty says, not too strongly, that at Kerak "corn is almost as the sands of the sea." All this is in spite of the extremely low rate of the population to the square mile and of the desert raids to which the eastern border lies almost flat.

In Byzantine times Moab appears to have been thickly peopled. You can stand hardly anywhere on the plateau, but eight or ten ruined villages, with Byzantine traces on them, are in sight; and once there were also several largish towns with public works, including huge reservoirs for the winter rains, and not a few other marks of a high level of culture. The Arab geographers praise the grapes and almonds of Moab, and the English survey of the northern part of the plateau discovered many wine-presses. But except for a very few about Kerak the vineyards have vanished and there are almost no other fruit-trees.

Bees abound, thriving on the wild blossoms, and there

is (I was told) considerable harvest of honey. One of the cañons, the Callirrhoe of the Greeks, enjoys great wealth of hot springs and streams, and all the cañons afford a warm, and at their mouths a tropical shelter throughout the year. The plateau itself is wind-swept, healthy in summer and with a somewhat rigorous winter. The land was never famous for its industries, though the mosaic pavements discovered among some of its ruins are wonderful.

Those deeply-marked alternate boundaries of Moab to the south, the Wady Mōjib, the ancient Arnon, and the Wady-el-Hesi (or el-Ahsa) have already been noted. South of the latter are the highlands of Edom, and this land also is of great fertility with some mineral resources that have not been worked since the time of the Romans.

Such is the Eastern Range from the Anti-Lebanon to Mount Seir, fruitful, healthy and in part endowed with some hydraulic possibilities, but cursed by insecurity. Along its eastern skirts, flattened to the desert, it presents to every possible government of Syria one of the heaviest of problems, which only the Romans have been able to solve—how to defend its opulence from the hungry and marauding tribes of Arabia. Within recent years the Turk has attempted this after a fashion of his own, playing off the Druzes and the Arabs against each other, and pushing out to the verge of the fertile soil colonies of Bulgar and Circassian Moslems to quarrel with and cut down the desert tribes. This policy affects only sections of the long frontier.[1] Elsewhere the peasants of the Eastern Range snatch a precarious peace by blackmail to the Arabs. In

[1] The story of Turkish troubles in Hauran during the last thirty years is one of melancholy intrigue, slaughter and confusion—Druse revolts, serious defeats of Turkish forces, and then the achievement of the subjection of the Druzes by dividing them against each other.

such conditions long views and sustained enterprise in agriculture are impossible.

THE DISCREDITED TURK

THAT, then, is Syria, over which for four centuries the Turk has held almost unbroken sway, with every opportunity to his hand that a fertile soil and a varied, industrious population can offer to their rulers. We see the results: the decay of large areas of fertility, the huddling of the more intelligent elements of the population upon the barer, less profitable shelves of the land, the depression and embitterment of the rest of the peasantry.

The Turk succeeded to many difficulties, certainly to more religious and racial antagonisms than rankle in any other part of the world. These his merely nominal tolerance has poised and provoked against each other for his own ends; but he has heaped up still greater evils by his economic neglect and fiscal oppression. Save for some sporadic efforts, he has been wanting in all for which a government exists—justice and security, the development of the natural resources, the organisation of public utilities, the encouragement of industry and trade—not to speak of education, in which his endeavours have been limited to a meagre number of primary schools, and a supply of fanatical instructors in the Moslem religion. Upon the social desert, into which he has turned nine-tenths of the country, the only oases are some hospitals, a few centres of higher education, the revival here and there of ancient water-supplies, a couple of good roads and a railway or two, with some examples of scientific and successful agriculture. But all these are due to other influences or inspired by other faiths than his own.

The fact receives emphasis from the contrast between the parts of Syria under the direct rule of the Turk and the condition of the Lebanon which, since 1860, has had a Christian Governor and Council beneath a Western Protectorate. In spite of enormous natural difficulties, agriculture and many industries flourish in Lebanon; a number of excellent roads have been laid across its ridges; and the population are as many as 160 to the square mile, compared with an average of 34.5 to the square mile throughout the rest of Syria. The contrast is decisive, and Lebanon stands as the proof of what all Palestine may become when emancipated from Turkish misrule.

The Turk is an alien in Syria, with no native claim to the soil, and few or no family ties to the people. In Syria Turkish colonies do not exist; the men of that race are either officials or soldiers. In short, the Turk has neither inherited nor earned any rights to Syria. His removal would present neither social nor economic difficulties.

THE DUTIES OF HIS SUCCESSOR

WHATEVER government, national or international, succeeds him, the interests that it must be righteous, wise and strong enough to secure are clearly the following: the protection and restoration of the once fertile but now wasted areas of the country along with the development of other areas whose hitherto untested possibilities are assured by recent experiments on similarly arid soils in other parts of the world; the security and freedom of the native populations; subject to this, the claims of Israel for a home in the land; and then the development of those industries for which so many of the people have shown a remarkable aptitude, and of those opportunities

for commerce that arise from the central position of the country.

It goes without saying that religious liberty must be absolute, and that in such a land, and especially at some of its centres, the task of administering that liberty will require extraordinary strength, wisdom and tact. Finally, very important in itself, but subordinate to those other things, will be the archæological responsibilities of the new government: the conservation of the countless monuments which so rich a history has bequeathed, and a methodical research into the many fields of the Syrian past, both above and below ground, that are still unexplored.

THE RECOVERY OF THE LAND

AS for the soil itself, or rather the various soils, it may be safely said that under care they are capable of a pitch of productiveness beyond that reached even in the most prosperous period of Syrian history. I leave Northern Syria at the summary descriptions given above and will write now only of the Lebanons and southward. Let us discount for the moment the glowing records of what Southern Syria has been to herself and the world about her. Let us reckon only her present aspect and products, with due allowance, of course, for the effects of four centuries of Turkish neglect and exaction, and the least conclusion we can draw is one of very fair promise.

Even Judæa, with its washed-out slopes, shattered terraces and stony tableland, is not the bleached skeleton that some hurried travellers have sketched for us. It is still alive—gaunt, haggard and with bones protruding, because long starved and maltreated—but alive as even the most maltreated land abides in God's hands against better times.

And Judæa is the least fertile part of Palestine. The acres of Philistia and Sharon, from which a scientific farming has recently succeeded in drawing two and even three times their former yield; the constantly fruitful vales of Ephraim; the almost unbroken wheat-field of Esdraelon; the rich plains and slopes of Galilee; the lower terraces of Lebanon; the vast orchards of Damascus watered by the Abana; the copious harvests of Hauran and Moab, with the wealth of Gilead's cattle—though all these three provinces lie exposed to the Arabs; the tropical soil and climate of the Jordan Valley; with the olive almost everywhere and nowhere fatter than on the limestone *débris* of Judæa and Galilee—these are the pledges of a rich and a varied future for a secure and emancipated people.

But in addition to these there are steppes and arid bottoms in the land, as ready to be transformed by irrigation or dry-farming as similarly unpromising districts have proved in California and other western States of America. To the present writer a journey into South California by the Mohave desert frequently recalled the aspects of various approaches into Syria through her encircling and obtrusive sands. The same natural difficulties, the same natural possibilities exist in the one region as in the other; given the same methods under the direction of Western experience and it is not hard to believe that the same or similar results would be obtained in the East as in the West.

It is not easy to estimate the possibilities of afforestation. Caution is necessary with the glowing deductions that have been made from the data of ancient literature on the subject. The Old Testament word, rendered *forest* in our versions, is often only *jungle* and never more than *woodland* when applied within Palestine proper. The

larger and more valuable timbers appear to have been imported from Lebanon, and it is to Carmel, Lebanon and Gilead alone that the sacred writers look for the ideal forest—the symbol of glory and pride. Elsewhere were only scattered woods, with sometimes thicker groves, of evergreen oak, terebinth, sycomore (only below 1,000 feet), carob, box, pine and cypress; with, of course, the heavy and valuable plantations of walnut about Damascus. The afforestation of Syria was probably never much more than we find to-day, with perhaps some exceptions such as the oak-woods of Sharon that lasted till the Crusades and the huge palm-groves of the Jordan valley in the Roman period.

But all this is far from being the measure of the capacity of Palestine as a timber-bearing country. It does not appear that a full chance of proving this capacity has ever been given the land—either by the conservation of its existing woods or by planting new ones. Under the Turk the waste has been reckless, and there has been very little re-planting. On the other hand, a few foreign attempts, chiefly with pines, have succeeded, and there is no natural obstacle to their extension over considerable areas unfit for other crops. But it is beyond Palestine proper that the chief hope of timber must remain. One of the first tasks of a new government should be the endeavour to restore the forests of Lebanon by the plantation of the higher ridges. On the skirts, too, of that mountain and of Hermon, especially about the sources of Jordan, large trees flourish, and the pinewoods south of Beyrout show what is possible there and on other sandy stretches of the coast.

Except about the Dead Sea and other volcanic districts, the mineral resources of Palestine are meagre, and even

there still uncertain.[1] In the southern Hauran, Gilead and the Jordan Valley we have seen unusual energies of water-power waiting to be applied to agriculture and the handicrafts.

It has been asserted that the decay of Syria is largely due to a change of climate, including a great diminution of the rainfall. But of this few signs exist except, at first sight, in the perplexing case of the Negeb.[2] On the other hand, there is close correspondence between the relevant data in the Bible and Talmud and the physical facts of to-day. That the change, if any, has been so slight as to be negligible is the opinion of the great majority of modern authorities, and the present writer is convinced that it is the right opinion. There is a possible explanation even of the Negeb. It is true that a considerable agriculture once prevailed here, and that no remains of aqueducts have been found to enable us to assign the cause to irrigation from the outside. But the structure of the country allows the possibility of many wells, and the disappearance from the Negeb of its ancient prosperity may be due to the loss of that political security without which the digging of wells, however industrious, is but a vain thing.

THE NATIVE PEASANTRY OR FELLAHIN

OF the human factors which demand the care of a just government none—not even the Jews—have a stronger claim than the native peasantry. In a land whose history has been so filled with invasion and migration, the peasants are bound to be of diverse stocks; and from district to district they vary in stature, physiognomy, men-

[1] See the present writer's *Jerusalem*, Vol. I., pp. 330 ff.
[2] See p. 25 of this book.

al force and culture. In the main they are Semitic, but have sprung from three distinct families of that race: the ancient Canaanites who entered Palestine about 2,500 B.C.; the Arameans who arrived about the same time as Israel—to-day both pure Arameans or (in Lebanon) Arameans probably crossed by a Greek strain; and Arabs who have drifted and still drift in from the desert, gradually passing from herding to tillage and from tents to stone hovels and houses in settled villages, large and small.

In parts of Northern Syria there also appear some Israelites of a long descent in the land. In other parts an Iranian element is found. In Southern Syria the native peasants are mostly Moslems, but with a considerable number of Christians and Druzes.

But whatever their varieties the *fellahin* have these things in common—that they labour, and for centuries have laboured, on the soil; that they are therefore the basis of the people and the state; and that all through history, but most cruelly under the Turk, their generations have borne the sorest service and suffering. On them have fallen most heavily the sirocco, the drought, and the consequent famine; and it is their smaller communities which have been most badly broken by the plague as well as by the raids of Arabs from the desert.

The abandoned villages of Syria are innumerable; hardly ever is the traveller out of sight of their ruins; on the maps of Palestine no designation is more frequent than "Khirbet," which means a ruined, forsaken hamlet. Ancient or recent, these fragments of desolation are the most damning witnesses to the insecurity of the land under Oriental rule.

In recent years the economic condition of the Syrian peasant has steadily declined. Property in land (which is

not *wakf*, or devoted to religious purposes) is of two kinds—*mulk*, or "owned," that is freehold, generally near to towns or villages, and mostly consisting of gardens or orchards; and *'amiriyeh*, "Emir's," or "State land," held in common by the village, and also called "Undivided land," which is invariably arable and is annually apportioned by lot among the families of the commune.[1] But in the last half-century this system has been rudely disturbed. After noting the "contrast between the poverty of the *fellahin* and the extent and fertility of the land owned by each village," Laurence Oliphant, who had long opportunities of observing, traced this paradox to the intolerable increase of the rents or taxes, aggravated by the novel exaction of these in cash instead of in kind, with the result that the peasants are thrown into the hands of the usurer, who demands from forty to fifty per cent. of interest on the cash he advances. Consequently much of the private and communal property of the peasants had at first to be mortgaged and then surrendered to the alien capitalist. Already in 1886, says Oliphant, the peasants of Esdraelon and the maritime plain were "rapidly losing proprietorship in the soil and becoming serfs."

It is true that the new proprietors have introduced improvements—better ploughs, hoes, barns, and so forth. But the State has done nothing for the land, though its revenues have increased. Outside certain properties of the Sultan, little attempt at irrigation has been made, no proper roads have been laid down. In 1891 in southern Hauran I saw part of a plentiful harvest sacrificed for want of means of transport. In spite of such conditions some villages manage to thrive, and some farmers, notably Christians, appear to be tolerably wealthy. It is difficult to say how far these exceptions have been rendered possible by susceptibility to

[1] For references see the present writer's *Jerusalem*, Vol. I., p. 230.

bribes on the part of officials whose salaries are always in arrear.

Estimates of the industry and ability of the Syrian peasant vary very much. Indolence is often imputed to him, and the charge, even if it were generally true, would not be surprising in view of the conditions just sketched. What stimulus of hope is possible under such a government? But the charge is not generally true. The mass of the peasantry, men and women, have to work hard, for they work for bare life, and one has frequent occasion to admire their starved patience and unblessed industry. Villages differ in character. Some are notoriously dishonest, malignant to strangers, fanatic against other faiths than their own. Others are the reverse, peaceable, courteous to travellers, not self-seeking, and controlled by sheikhs, whom I have often found gentlemen and helpful. In some communities Christians, Jews and Moslems live in amity.

The ignorance of the fellahin is generally deep, but that is not their fault. On the other hand one discovers a remarkable shrewdness among them, worthy of far better opportunities. There is generally a healthy discipline; the good example of the elders, whether men or women, is revered and their counsel obeyed. Certain districts produce capable artisans. There is through the land a considerable body of folk-song, of no mean lyric quality. Drudges as most of the fellahin must be for the greater part of the year, into what good spirits, what jest and song and dance they will burst at harvest and other festivals! Mr. Hogarth says:[1] "There is no more enterprising, no keener intellect in the Nearer East than the Syrian of the Fringe . . . the inhabitants of the Lebanon and the Syrian littoral." He ascribes this excellence to the in-

[1] *The Nearer East*, p. 194.

creased quality of the staples of life; "where the 'Arab' (to use the ethnic widely) lives under conditions similar to the Greek he resembles him at many points, both physical and mental." But may not this excellence be partly due to the crossing of the Semite by a Greek strain? And in the Lebanon we cannot forget what is more certain, the comparative freedom and security enjoyed by its inhabitants for two generations. Their superiority is the pledge of a general rise in the moral and mental level of the Syrian peasantry as a whole, when those blessings shall have been extended to all the land by a strong and a just government.

THE CLAIMS OF THE JEWS

THE claim of the modern Jew to a "national home" in Palestine is threefold:—by right of the history of his fathers, by right of his own devotion to the ideal of a national life, and by right of his recent successful exertions on the soil. To assist the fulfilment of his ideal is only a part of what the civilised world owes to the Jew, because of his spiritual service to mankind and because of the treatment he has suffered from other races since he was driven from his land. In the face of inconceivable difficulties the Jew (as we have seen) has given proof of his practical ability not only to develop the resources of Palestine but thereby to enable it to contribute once more to the general interests of civilisation, as from its position and fertility it is so well-fitted to do.

We must not forget to do justice to the German settlers at Haifa and on Sharon, the pioneers of revived agriculture in Syria. Laurence Oliphant, who for a number of years was their neighbour, bears witness to their honesty,

their thoroughness, and the influence of their example on the natives. But according even to their friends the Turks, the effect of the work of the Germans has been merely local. In agricultural results and in influence on the peasantry they have been far outdone by the Jewish colonists on the Maritime Plain and in other districts.[1]

It is not surprising, therefore, that during the last twenty years there has been a rapid growth of the idea of "Palestine for the Jews" among both themselves and other peoples. The labours of Dr. Herzl and the influence of the Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897, over which he presided, gave the movement its strongest spiritual impetus from within Jewry. But both its hopes and many of its immediate claims have received an increasing amount of recognition from the Press and from responsible statesmen among the great Powers. It is not a few years ago that Lord Cromer declared that "Zionism is fast becoming a practical issue."

But if practical before the war it has become immensely more so as the war has gone on. Since the Turk, in any case an alien and a discredited alien has further shaken his hold on Syria by his alliance with the enemies of civilisation, the hopes of the Jews and the sympathies of the great Powers have naturally ripened. With the Belgians, Serbians, Montenegrins, Roumanians, and Armenians, the Jews have been recognised as one of the weak peoples for whose national freedom the Allies are battling. Their right to "a home" in Palestine with some degree of autonomy has been affirmed by democratic parties in Great Britain, in other European countries, and in America; and has been acknowledged by more than one of the Allied Governments.

Even in Germany the strength of the Jewish claims

[1] See above, p. 20.

upon Palestine is admitted—always, of course, with respect to Germany's bonds to her Turkish ally. With the exception of the Roman Catholic organs, the German Press has welcomed the prospect of a large return of the Jews to the Holy Land on the grounds that "Jews have already learned to support themselves there," that their settlement "would benefit the native Arabs" (*sic*), that "the Turks have always been tolerant of Jews," and that Jews have ever been disposed to be loyal citizens of the Turkish Empire and "can be of economic advantage to it." On the other hand in Italy Baron Sonnino has pronounced that "Palestine must be freed from the Turkish yoke; once so freed it would be neutralised and internationalised, and declared an independent State" with due regard of course to Jewish rights.

But the most momentous factor in the Zionist movement is Mr. Balfour's declaration on behalf of the British Government that "it views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

So far has the movement progressed. Its strength is clear, its prospects bright—especially since the capture of Jerusalem by a British force—and the devotion to its ideals of large numbers of Jews undoubted. It has the sympathy of the Allied Powers as of their peoples behind them, and even the Master of the Turk acknowledges that a place must be found for the Jews within the political future of Syria. Yet even so, one must be impressed with the vagueness which still envelopes the hopes and purposes of Zionism. It is clear that Jews are ready, and

must be allowed, to settle in Palestine, in very greatly increased numbers, for the cultivation of the soil (of their fitness for which they have given solid proof) and with a certain degree of autonomy, free to express their "national" as well as their religious and economic aspirations.

Beyond this and the firm conditions happily laid down by the British Government, nothing is yet definite. However deserving of our sympathy, the Jewish claims have not been so thought out in face of the present facts of Palestine as to command our unqualified support. The uncertainty is not only due to the fact that the war is unfinished and the political future of Syria is still in suspense, nor only to the difficult international questions that will have to be settled, if and when the Turkish power in Syria is abolished.

The vagueness is also due to division of opinion among the Jews themselves, and to the fact that in enthusiasm for the undoubted justice of their aspirations Zionists appear to ignore or at best unduly to depreciate the economic and social difficulties in the way of a "national" Jewish restoration, and in particular that the very grave questions of the area of the Jewish home and of its frontiers have not been as yet even fully stated, far less discussed or answered. To answer these questions is not within the scope of this essay; but in the interest of the education of the public it is necessary to endeavour to state them. We do so first by inquiring more exactly what are the Jewish aspirations, and then by observing how they are encountered and affected by the existing conditions of Palestine, physical and social.

A portion of British Jewry, in number a minority, but of intellectual force and apparently supported by a body of Jewish opinion in America, looks for the establishment in Palestine of a community of Jews which, while eco-

nomically independent, shall exist mainly for religious purposes, "a source of inspiration to the whole of Jewry"—the Jewish communities throughout the rest of the world meantime continuing to cultivate "complete social and political identification with the nations among whom they dwell."

This, of course, is far short of the "national" ideal of the Zionists. It is the old controversy whether the test of a Jew is his religion or his nationality. But it is complicated by the fact that while the limitation of Jewish hopes of Palestine to a Jewish community existing there for *mainly* religious purposes is advocated by the less rigorous parties in Judaism, the Zionist demand for the restoration of the Jewish nation in Palestine—"for Judaism is not only a creed but a nationality"—is supported by parties ardently orthodox and many of them profoundly spiritual.

Nor are the Zionists themselves of one mind. There are the extremely political Zionists, who demand the creation of an autonomous Jewish *state* under international guarantees, and offer Belgium as an example of what they mean. But moderate, or, as they call themselves, "practical," Zionists, realising that the Jews now are, and for some time must still be, a minority in Palestine, and "preferring the line of safe and sure development," disclaim the idea of an independent Jewish state, and plead only for the restoration of their people as a nationality.

As one has said of the Zionist Congress: "It was not to establish a Jewish State to-day or to-morrow that we went to Basle, but to proclaim aloud to the whole world: 'The Jewish people still lives and wants to live.'" But this restoration to Palestine, which "practical" Zionists demand, is not the restoration of a vast number of individual Jews as free citizens of whatever state may be

established there, nor merely the extension of the present system of Jewish colonies owning scattered districts with freedom to manage their own business and local affairs. It is the establishment of the Jews as *a nation,* "under Jewish law, in possession of the whole of the Jewish land," and using, of course, the Hebrew language. Their own words are "a Jewish Palestine," "the establishment of a Jewish national home" (which appears also in Mr. Balfour's declaration), "a home for Judaism, for Jewish civilisation as well for some millions of Jews, in the ancient land of Israel." Or again, "We want Palestine, the whole country, to be the home of the Jews, and we want to live under our own laws, not indeed with the outward shell of a State, but with the inner kernel of free and independent institutions."

It would not be at all fair to interpret this desire as one for all the blessings, without any of the heaviest responsibilities, of nationality. The desire is most natural—perhaps the only one possible—to a people who, while heroically preserving their national spirit through eighteen centuries of dispersion and many persecutions, are without the experience or the means required for government and its international duties. Towards the fulfilment of a national restoration Zionists reckon, not without reason, on the migration of millions of Jews to Palestine. However Jewry may be divided in opinion as to the shape which that restoration should take, there is little doubt that, given freedom to return and possess land under their own laws, Jews would resort to Palestine in sufficient numbers to form a nation. Moreover, there is room for them in the country; from what we have seen its capacity to support them is not to be denied, nor, as their colonies have shown, can we doubt their ability to develop this.

It is also natural that at this stage of the war Jewish

opinions should not be agreed as to what is to be the supreme power in Palestine. Some Zionists, perhaps the wisest, refrain from making any proposals. Others conceive of a wide but undefined international suzerainty, others of a protectorate by a single great Power, or of a condominium by two or three; while some non-Jewish writers suggest that this should be assumed by France, Italy and Britain.

But many Jews deprecate the idea of a condominium, the risks and failures of which have been experienced elsewhere, and claim that the protectorate must be single. Great Britain and the United States have each been named as the Power most desirable in the circumstances, British Jews and in particular the British Palestine Society strongly pleading for the former. Their phrase is "a free nationality within the British Empire"; their reasons, that free nationalities, prosperous and contented, already exist within that Empire—the Jewish would only be one more.

To complete this account of Jewish opinion it is necessary to add that some Zionists also appeal to British interests. They seek to show that the Judæan plateau is "the needed bulwark of the Suez Canal," "the outer bastion of Egypt," and that "the natural buffer-state to Egypt is Palestine."

Such are the aspirations of the Zionists and the plans of some of them. How do they bear upon the existing facts of the situation?

RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS

WE may take first the religious facts, though, except in one respect, that of the holy places, the religious facts are not the most difficult or acute. Were Jewish influence, social and political, to become predominant in Palestine—if only through sheer force of numbers—I do not think it would prove intolerant to other creeds. Delicate and even dangerous as the relations of religions have always been in Syria, and fanatic against other faiths as fractions of the Jewish population might prove to be, the general spirit of the modern race is tolerant, and with international guarantees for religious liberty, can be trusted to subdue the passion or arrogance of groups of its own people.

The particular question of the sacred places is more dangerous; it will always be difficult whatever race or faith may prevail in the land.[1] How would Jewish influence treat it? I have seen general promises by Zionists on the subject. But it is when one comes to details that the danger first rises. You may make Jerusalem an international, a free or neutral, city, with rights equal to Christians, Jews and Moslems. But how does the Jew propose to decide between himself and the Moslem the question of the possession or of the use of the sacred Rock beneath the Mosque of Omar, or of the Mosque at Hebron?

[1] See above, p. 5.

ECONOMIC QUESTIONS

THERE are other and even more serious difficulties connected with the restoration of the Jews to Palestine which must be faced before the political future of that country and of those who have claims upon it is determined. There is the case of the native *fellahin*. We have seen what their stake in the land is, what rights in the soil they have earned, what claims their centuries of service and suffering give them upon the sympathies of the free democracies by whom their fate will have to be decided.[1]

With regard to these claims, it is not enough to say, as some Zionists have done, that there is room in the land both for the "Arabs" (as Zionists erroneously call them) and for the Jews. When Jewish writers claim "the whole country for the Jews," when they write of "the re-settlement and rebirth of Palestine" as "the national centre" of "the Jewish nation," have they realised the economic and social disturbances which the execution of this claim would involve? It is useless to compare the claims of the Jews on Palestine with the rights of the Belgians to Belgium. When the Belgians are restored to their land it will not be at the risks of a native peasantry different from themselves, who have owned and lived by its soil for centuries. How do Zionists propose to preserve the legal rights and secure the social health of the *fellahin*, or to prevent the continuation of that process of buying and crushing them out of their communal property, by which so many have already been reduced to the position of serfs? It is no duty of the present writer to answer these questions; but while Jewish hopes are high and

[1] See above, p. 40 ff.

legitimately high, it is right to point out what difficulties lie in the way of their equitable fulfilment, and what very serious economic details have still to be thought out.

In illustration, an experience may be quoted. On visiting a recently established Jewish colony in the north-east of the land, round which a high wall had been built by the munificent patron, I found the colonists sitting in its shade gambling away the morning, while groups of *fellahin* at a poor wage did the cultivation for them. I said that this was surely not the intention of their patron in helping them to settle on land of their own. A Jew replied to me in German: "Is it not written: *The sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and vinedressers?*"

I know that such delinquencies have become the exceptions in the Jewish colonisation of Palestine, but they are symptomatic of dangers which will have to be guarded against. When we hear that Jews desire to live under their own laws in Palestine, and rightly sympathise with that desire, we must at the same time take sureties that these laws shall not include those of the Old Testament which might encourage baser Jews to the "sweating" of the natives as hewers of wood and drawers of water.

THE LIMITS OF THE JEWISH AREA

AGAIN there is the question of the limits of the Jewish area with all the difficulties it raises, both ethnic and strategic. Zionists claim for the Jews "the whole country" of Palestine; and one writer adds: "there must be no partition of Palestine; the Jew in Galilee must not be cut off by an international frontier from the Jew in Jerusalem." But what is *Palestine?* Save under the

Romans, the name has never had exact borders; to-day it is perhaps more vaguely applied than at any other time.

Which of the possible lines of division we have seen round and across Syria are to be the frontiers of the new Syria, when the Turk is forced to relinquish the land and some other Power or Powers assume authority? And when these frontiers have been settled, on ethnic and military considerations, how much of what they embrace is to belong to the Jewish people as a nationality, and to be administered under Jewish law?

Some regions may at once be ruled out of the Jewish sphere; others are doubtful; others we cannot exclude. There is Middle Syria between two definite borders, the Nahr el-Kebîr on the north and the Nahr el-Kasimiyeh, and containing the Lebanon. What rights, historical or moral, have the Jews to this? For at least fifteen centuries Lebanon has been Christian territory, and as we have seen has enjoyed since 1860 a separate constitution with a Christian governor under the protection of the Powers of Europe. The population is about 400,000, of whom 320,000 are Christians, 50,000 Druzes and the rest Moslems, with practically no Jews. There is Beyrout with a population of over 100,000, of whom two-thirds are Christian and the rest Moslem. There is also the Phœnician coast south of the Kasimiyeh without a single memory of Jewish occupation or of the influence of Jewish culture. There is Eastern Palestine separated from Galilee and Judæa by the deep trench of the Jordan and Dead Sea. What is the evidence of history as to Jewish rights over these eastern provinces?

Except when Herod had the legions of Rome behind him the Jewish nation failed to exercise authority or keep order in Hauran in parts of Gilead and in Moab. Their conquests were temporary, their settlements incon-

stant. The civilisation of those provinces was never Jewish but Greek, Roman or Byzantine; and the last was long ensured by tribes of Christian Arabs—wardens of the marches—who themselves developed an impressive culture and have left, standing to this day on the desert-margins, monuments of their ability and character. These Arab Christians have not died out; scattered communities of them still endure east of the Jordan, as far south as Kerak, at other points in Moab and Gilead, and even in Hauran and on the Druze-Mountain. Again, there is the Negeb, where the only remains of settled life are Byzantine. There is Philistia, only occasionally in Jewish hands.

There is Damascus itself, the largest city and the real metropolis of Syria, in which the Jew never had rights except the right to trade; and the moral claims to predominance are shared by the Christian and the Moslem.[1]

Judæa, Samaria and Galilee are left. Is the whole of each of these to be the area of the Jewish "national home"? The religious history of Jerusalem and the devotion to her of so many living faiths point to the conclusion that the city and its territory should be absolutely neutral under international guarantees. But if the rest of Western Palestine be given back to the Jewish people as a people, what of the Christian communities within it, especially in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood —where they have given as good proof as many Jewish colonists of their power to farm the soil—and in Nazareth and its neighbourhood, also at other points. Napoleon when he camped on Esdraelon was impressed by the numbers of Christians from Galilee who came to do him homage; since then they have not diminished.

[1] See above, p. 30.

Thus the claims of the Zionists, strong though they be, raise larger and more detailed questions than their copious literature has discussed or even stated. The Zionist rightly appeals to history; but his appeal must be decided on wider and more complicated considerations than he advances—not only the Jewish associations and achievements in Palestine, but Jewish limitations and failures as well, along with the rights that other races and faiths have undoubtedly earned in that doubly and trebly sacred land.

It is not true that "Palestine is the national home of the Jewish people and of no other people." It is not correct to call its non-Jewish inhabitants "Arabs," or to say that "they have left no image of their spirit and made no history—except in the great Mosque." We may rule out the Franks, their brief discipline of Syria and the many monuments of this that remain. But what of the native Christians, Syrian and Greek? They doubtless claim that their faith is the moral heir of all that was best in ancient Judaism.

If agreement on that question is impossible, there remains the other, which we cannot evade, of the fact of the living Christian communities. Have they not been as long in possession of their portions of the land as ever the Jews were? Is not Palestine the birthplace of their faith also and its fields as sacred to Christians as to Jews? Has Christianity "made no history" and "left no image of its spirit" on the Holy Land?

These are legitimate questions stirred by the claims of Zionism, but the Zionists have not yet fully faced them. In short, the Jewish question in the Holy Land cannot be decided by itself, nor merely upon general assurances that "the rights of other creeds and races will be respected" under Jewish dominance. Obviously a very great

deal of difficult detail has still to be thought out by the Powers of Europe—and the democracies of Europe educated in the thinking thereof—before the future of Syria can be settled on lines of justice and security for all nations and creeds alike.

THE FRONTIERS OF NEW SYRIA

A MERE allusion has been made to the wider question of the frontiers of the New Syria as a whole. At this stage it is premature to attempt a full answer to the question. But our survey of the land has made some outlines more or less clear.

The southern border of Syria, from time immemorial, has been a line drawn from el-Arish on the coast to the head of the Gulf of Akaba—all the desert beyond has been regarded as belonging to Egypt. Under the conditions of ancient and mediæval warfare, and indeed down to the time of Napoleon, this desert was considered as strong a barrier and bulwark as is possible between two States. In Napoleon's own words: "De tous les obstacles qui peuvent couvrir les frontières des empires un désert pareil à celui-ci est incontestablement le plus grand . . . car, si on a tant de difficulté à transporter les vivres d'une armée que rarement on y réussit complètement, cette difficulté devient vingt fois plus grande, quand il faut traîner avec soi l'eau, les fourrages et le bois, trois choses d'un grand poids, très difficiles à transporter et qu'ordinairement les armées trouvent sur les lieux."

Modern means of transport have indeed rendered the Syro-Egyptian desert somewhat less formidable; yet even so we may doubt the Zionists' contention (by which they appeal to British interests) that Egypt and the Suez

Canal require "a buffer state" in Palestine, and more particularly on the Judæan plateau. And, besides, if this State is created, where is its own *northern* frontier to run? Hardly over Esdraelon, for that, as we have seen, is neither a political nor a strategic border.[1] If the next natural line were chosen, the Nahr-el-Kasimiyeh,[2] then "the buffer State" would itself require a buffer, for its northern frontier would run defenceless against the foot of a great mountain-wall. But in any case the argument for a Judæan buffer to Egypt is not conclusive. A friendly State in southern Syria would indeed be a support, but not an indispensable support, to the security of the Canal or of Egypt.

If Lebanon, or the Lebanons, be created a Christian province which they essentially are, and already in 1860 were recognised to be by the Great Powers of Europe, the natural boundaries would be those which have frequently formed political frontiers—the Nahr-el-Kebîr to the north and the Nahr-el-Kasimiyeh on the south; and Beyrout would have to be brought in. But how is Damascus to be related to such a province? Bound to the Lebanons by many ties of neighbourhood and trade, as well as by the blood of a large part of its population, Damascus carries far wider responsibilities than these both to the rest of Syria and to Arabia, and therefore in any reconstruction of the nearer East stands a problem by itself.

North of the Lebanons the possible frontiers are two[3] —first the westward bend of the Orontes to the sea, and then the Taurus itself. But the questions they raise, with the kindred question of Aleppo, depend for their answers on the settlement of the political future of Meso-

[1] See above, p. 13.
[2] See above, p. 13.
[3] See above, pp. 13, 21.

potamia—a subject beyond the scope of our present inquiry.

Finally, there is the Eastern frontier. This can hardly be the Jordan-Orontes Valley. It is impossible to conceive of the provinces over Jordan and the Orontes as excluded from the New Syria. But if they are included her government must be of a power sufficient to render their open borders on the desert secure against tribes of whom there can be no hope for some time that they will respect civilisation's ideals of disarmament. Even if a stable government be founded in the Hejaz, it cannot be relied on as able to control the warrior hordes of Northern Arabia. The tribes which rove between Palestine and the Euphrates reckon their fighting-men by many scores of thousands; a very large number of whom are armed with Martini-Henry and other modern rifles.

For the peace and prosperity of Syria a strong Eastern frontier down the desert is essential. And is Edom to come within this frontier or to be left to the Arab, when the Turk is removed? The last European government which held Western Palestine, that of the Crusaders, found it necessary to build fortresses in the Edomite highlands and to push its arms by that direction as far as the Gulf of Akaba—as the Romans did before it.

All this is enough to make clear that the Power or Powers to whom the political future of Syria falls will have problems before them far more serious than any that Britain has had to solve in Egypt, and quite as heavy as those which gather along the northern and north-western frontiers of the Indian Empire.

EPILOGUE

AS I write these last paragraphs the news comes in of the liberation of Jerusalem from the Turk on the 9th December by a British force, including troops from all the British Dominions over the seas and Indian Moslems, as well as French and Italian detachments. It was, besides, the very day on which Jews celebrate the anniversary of her deliverance by Judas Maccabeus.

In his solemn entry to the Holy City the British General was accompanied by the attachés of France, Italy, and the United States of America. Guardians were appointed for all the Christian sanctuaries. The Indian Moslems were put in charge of the Mosque of Omar, and the hereditary Moslem custodians of the gates of the Holy Sepulchre were requested to continue their accustomed duties in remembrance of the magnanimous act of the Khalif Omar who protected that Church.

May this wonderful beginning—even if it is not followed by the harmless conquest of the rest of the Holy Land—be the earnest of the creation, for the first time on earth, of a government devoted wholly to Peace, with no temptation to war in itself and no provocation to other States, because founded by the agreement and solemn guarantees of all peoples to whom the land is dear and holy. What fitter soil could be dedicated to this ideal, which we pray to be gradually fulfilled all the world over, than that on which the coming of the Prince of Peace was predicted, on which He was born and suffered and died, that He might draw all men to Himself and to one another!

In these pages we have been engaged with the merely material foundations, resources, and securities of the New

Syria. Wide and rich as they are, pregnant with the fullest promise to the land and its various peoples, they cannot avail without the devotion of these peoples, and of the Western Governments and democracies which support them, to those principles and ideals of which the land's sons have been the prophets to mankind. In the words of one of them—*until the Spirit be poured from on high and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the work of righteousness be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever; and My people shall abide in a peaceable habitation and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting places.* Then shall it be confidently said, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!*

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